(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the fund is going to become operational from the current financial year; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE):(a) and (b) The then Finance Minister, in his speech while presenting the interim Budget 2004-2005, had announced the setting up of a Non-lapsable Defence Modernisation Fund for acquisition of weapons systems.

(c) and (d) This matter relates to the Budget which is to be presented tomorrow.

Trial of 155 MM 52 Calibre Towed Howitzer System

62. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in the first week of January, 2004 the Indian Army has carried out new round of tests on 155 mm 52 Calibre Towed Howitzer System;

(b) if so, the results thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that in the earlier tests the above systems have not met the general staff qualitative requirements; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) In view of answer to Part (a) above, does not arise.

(c) User trials were carried out earlier, but none of the systems met all the General Staff Qualitative Requirements.

(d) The systems which were trial evaluated earlier require further technological upgrades.